

EXHIBIT P

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Sonya Larson <larsonya@gmail.com>

[Grub Chunky Monkeys] The Chunk T Shirt (aka "Chunk Chic")

Sonya Larson <larsonya@gmail.com>

Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 4:19 PM

To: "grubchunkymonkeys@googlegroups.com" <grubchunkymonkeys@googlegroups.com>

Yeah, I definitely don't think that Dawn's feelings are invalid. I can understand the anxiety. I just think she's trying to control something that she doesn't have the ability or right to control, and sort of externalizing her inner stuff onto other people, which I guess is her M.O.

The other day I said to Whitney something like, "I just wish that she was handling this differently," and Whitney said, "Yeah, but if she was the sort of person who handled things differently, then you would never have written the story." And thus the Möbius strip of dynamics here...

And thank you so much for that Joyce Maynard perspective, Adam!! I think her words are right on. And yeah, the "writer who tipped me off" is pretty douchey, any way you spell it...

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 4:10 PM, Celeste Ng <celesteng@gmail.com> wrote:

No, it's totally okay for Dawn to be upset--but it doesn't mean that Sonya did anything wrong, or that she is responsible for fixing Dawn's hurt feelings. (I don't know Dawn, and am not friends with her on Facebook, and basically avoid Facebook like I'd avoid a Porta-potty at a crowded public event on a hot summer day, so I will butt out after this, but mostly? I just don't want Sonya to be fretting over this at VSC. Don't fret, Sonya. You didn't do anything wrong, and this will blow over.)

Celeste Ng

author of *Everything I Never Told You*

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On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 4:06 PM, Calvin Hennick <hennick.calvin@gmail.com> wrote:

My feelings about this are actually a little more complicated than y'all's, but I'm struggling to articulate why, and I'm hesitant to write anything, because Dawn really is obnoxious, and I really don't think Sonya did anything wrong. But I'm generally bad at shutting up, so here goes.

I guess it comes down to the fact that I think these four things can be true at the same time:

1. Dawn is obnoxious.
2. Sonya didn't do anything wrong.
3. Dawn's hurt feelings aren't completely invalid.
4. Sonya's icky feeling isn't completely invalid.

The first draft of the story really *was* a take-down of Dawn, wasn't it? The character had Dawn's name, and everybody in that workshop immediately recognized Dawn Dorland in the story. Publishing that draft of the story, I think, would have been a really assy thing to do. Don't get me wrong. *Writing* the draft and bringing it into workshop wasn't assy. That's what we do with drafts. We put them in front of people to figure out what they are.

But Sonya didn't publish that draft, because Sonya is not an assy person! She created a new, better story that used Dawn's Facebook messages as initial inspiration, but that was about a lot of big things, instead of being about the small thing of taking down Dawn Dorland. But all Dawn hears is that someone is publicly reading a story that seems drawn from her life, and she can't figure out why no one has told her about it. And the reason no one has told her may have something to do with the fact that the story's origins lie in Dawn being an obnoxious person.

I don't think I've succeeded in un-muddying this for myself. But I do think it's at least a little muddy, inherently. None of which is to say that Sonya should spend even another second of her residency thinking about this shit. But I'm not sure it's fair to totally dismiss Dawn's feelings, even if she is seeming more and more to all of us like someone who is only able to "feel" in the form of passive-aggressive or self-aggrandizing Facebook posts.

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 3:51 PM, Adam Stumacher <adamstumacher@gmail.com> wrote:

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Damn, um, ok. Sonya, this sucks but no hashtags aside you are most definitely not fucked. It's a hell of a story and it keeps getting better every time I see it, and with each draft the donor character becomes more and more her own complex, flawed, engaging, fully realized fictional character, utterly unrelated to the individual whose action helped you imagine the story (because that's all she did). Also, as others have pointed out, the piece isn't even centered around the donor to begin with. Just like the world isn't centered around the person who inspired her, just saying.

And don't get me started on the dude, who is such a total dude, the one who makes a cameo as "another writer who tipped me off" in previously referenced passive-aggressive Facebook post. Let's just say I've taught many, many hundreds of Grub students over the years and he is in fact the single douchiest individual I've ever taught (sample comment: "how come everybody thinks Junot Diaz is so great when he can only write about Dominicans?"). Is that even how you spell "douchiest?" I've never written the word before. Let's just say this dude is the reason I am even asking the question.

Anyway, I don't really do nonfiction because I can't resist the beautiful lie that feels true, but I do remember a few years ago when Jenn and I co-taught a workshop with Joyce Maynard, and she said something that stuck. I'm paraphrasing, but the idea is basically that you should write the story as truly as you can, pretending nobody will ever read it, and only later, just before you publish, send it to the people effected -- not for their permission, just so they hear it from you first. This is, I think, pretty good advice, and it applies to fiction as much as nonfiction. It's unfortunate that in the age of social media the moment a story is "published" is less clearly defined than it used to be.

I'm on my first day on my writing retreat up in Maine, and I've allowed myself one hour of internet per day, and for what it's worth I'd much rather spend it thinking about this than the Republican convention. Offline now. Much love to all of you.

Adam

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 3:45 PM, Sonya Larson <larsonya@gmail.com> wrote:

Oh my god. Totally giggling right now. [RELIEF!!]

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 3:44 PM, Jennifer De Leon <delejenn@gmail.com> wrote:

yes, what Whitney said. completely. maybe she was too busy waving from her floating thing at a Macy's Day parade instead of you know, writing and stuff.

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 3:35 PM, Whitney Scharer <wscharer@gmail.com> wrote:

As I have already expressed to Sonya, I think this whole thing is total bullshit. I find it deeply narcissistic to be pissed about someone "taking" your story--THAT YOU PUT PUBLICLY ON FACEBOOK FOR ALL TO SEE.

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 2:56 PM, Sonya Larson <larsonya@gmail.com> wrote:

Yes, I told her that learning of her kidney donation made me imagine a whole array of narrative possibilities, which I shaped into a story. I don't want to lie-- it's true! But I insisted that the story is focused on the recipient, and that I see the story as being about ideas that are bigger than the situation (ingratitude, shame, giving/owing, addiction, race). But she doesn't seem interested.

Perhaps, as Whitney has suggested, once she reads the story she'll feel relief in seeing that it's not "about" her. Or maybe she'll go on 2nd tear, because let's face it, the donor in the story is equally flawed and complex (thanks to the great Chunky advice you guys gave me!!).

Ugh. #AmFucked

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 2:46 PM, Calvin Hennick <hennick.calvin@gmail.com> wrote:

Well, the character was named "Dawn" in an earlier draft, but I don't think anyone who's not on this email thread knows that.

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 2:41 PM, Celeste Ng <celesteng@gmail.com> wrote:

I don't even understand why she's so convinced it's "about" her. I mean, she's not the only person who's donated a kidney, and the story isn't even about kidney donation per se, it's about a kidney recipient. Have you stated explicitly that it was "inspired" by her in any way?

Basically, what Alexandria and Grace said. I'm so sorry you have to deal with this, Sonya. Honestly, it doesn't seem to me like you've done anything wrong, and you may just have to let her chill out and go

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about her business.

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On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 2:17 PM, Sonya Larson <larsonya@gmail.com> wrote:

God-- thank you, thank you, thank you. What you said is exactly it, Alexandria and Grace: I can totally appreciate that it sucks to feel written about, even in a work of fiction. It happened to me once (side note: I remember he used the descriptor "vaguely Asian eyes").

But yeah-- what can you do? Writers have every right to do this, and they/we do it all the time, in ways large and small. You can't control it, and you certainly can't ask the writer to "apologize"-- which is what Dawn has asked me to do.

I think your response is best of all, Grace-- turn on Freedom and keep writing! I love the Chunks. Damn.

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